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LABOUR MONTHLY

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Survey—August 15, 1976

WHAT IS SOCIALISM?

'To secure for the workers by hand or brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange.'
Labour Party Constitution, Clause 4.

'To bring about a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families.'
Labour Party Manifesto.

'The economic foundation of the USSR is the socialist system of economy and socialist ownership of the instruments and means of production. . . .
'The economic life of the USSR is determined and directed by the state national-economic plan, with the aim of increasing the public wealth, of steadily raising the material and cultural standards of the working people, of consolidating the independence of the USSR and strengthening its defensive capacity.'
Constitution of the USSR, Articles 4 and 11.

At a time when both the TUC and Labour Party are preparing for their annual conferences the background is opportune for a discussion of socialism. On the one hand, we have a Labour government in power which is jettisoning every 'socialist' item in its programme under the deceptive title of 'social contract'. 'Temporary expressions of tripartite goodwill between the government, TUC and CBI,' wrote the *Daily Telegraph*'s John Paven on August 4, 'have revived speculation that Britain is slipping or being steered towards the corporate state.' A suspicion, incidentally, which is expressed in one of our letters this month. Or, as the *Financial Times* (July 23) commented on the further boost given to prices by allowing companies to pass on to consumers as much as 50 per cent of new investment, 'Mr Denis Healey's statement received a highly qualified welcome from the Conservatives.' No wonder, for the government is playing direct into the hands of the monopolies by allowing them to burden consumers with 50 per cent of so-called 'investment costs', formerly known as reinvested monopoly profits. Such a policy is obviously price-raising and inflationary.

At the same time the new president of the CBI decides publicly to cancel a letter to businesses asking them to reinvest, an open declara-

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tion of an investment strike. (If workers strike, there is a nation-wide hullabaloo in the media, but an investment strike is different, the bosses do it!)

Unable to muster a credible offensive against the Labour government's Tory 'socialism', Mrs Thatcher took the opportunity on July 31 to launch an all-round screech against all the socialist countries for alleged failure to honour the Helsinki Agreement. Well backed up with revised figures of alleged socialist armaments, Mrs Thatcher's speech once again returned to the cold war. Roy Mason, while critical of her screeching, appeared to fall over backwards to concur with the spirit of her attack and to condemn outright the Labour Party Executive's call for a £1,000 million cut in arms expenditure, a call which receives backing from ten resolutions for the Labour Party Conference.

Another current in the present pre-conference stream is a clear attempt by the Establishment to drive a wedge between the trade unions and the left in the Labour Party. 'Cabinet ministers and union leaders combined against Labour's militants' is how a *Times* (July 27) writer saw it, so that 'the left wing of the National Executive is alone in insisting upon an alternative strategy.'

It is in the face of this line-up of 'the right', including most Labour Party leaders and most of the TUC General Council, plus Tories, big industrialists, financiers and the multinationals, that 'the left' in both the Labour Party and the trade unions must show its strength at the two conferences. No wonder that *Tribune* (August 6) foresees 'the bitterest TUC for years'.

Two Agendas

At the time of going to press two provisional agendas are to hand, for both the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party Conference. It is clear from both these documents that neither in the trade unions nor in the Labour Party is there the 'unanimity' behind the government's policy which the media are trying to conjure up.

In both agendas there are acute signs of increasing disappointment at the way in which things are going, and a clear demand for more socialist measures. While the agreements so far worked out with the government on pay and public spending cuts have received majority approval at the top, it is explicitly stated by one union in a TUC resolution that 'the second stage of the social contract' has led to sacrifices 'made in the context of serious public expenditure cuts, massive unemployment and high rates of inflation.' The union moving this, the Association of Cinematograph, Television and

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allied Technicians (ACTT) calls for 'a return to free collective bargaining, . . . price freezing on food, rents and interest rates for mortgages, . . . substantial reinvestment in the National Enterprise Board', the management of sterling 'under government control' and the reduction of unemployment. The Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades Union puts forward an even more comprehensive policy including strict price controls, increased taxation on the rich, increased investment in manufacturing and less in property, increased funds for the NEB, selective import controls, restriction on export of capital, increased food subsidies and increased public expenditure. In conclusion it urges the General Council to enter into no further commitments with the government unless immediate steps are taken to reduce unemployment.

Add to the above points the cutting of defence expenditure on which there are ten Labour Party resolutions, effective measures against the multinationals, to which only one resolution is devoted in each document, firm measures against racialism mentioned in both agendas, and a genuine socialist-orientated peace policy, and a positive alternative programme emerges that is genuinely opposed to Toryism.

In the Labour Party Conference agenda the classifying of resolutions under subjects leads to a great deal of overlapping. If we consider the relative numbers of resolutions we get the following approximate order of importance: pensions, retirement, disablement, concessionary fares (42); public ownership, nationalisation, NEB, investment, finance and banks (42); housing, including Clay Cross (28); electoral reform and abolition of House of Lords (26); racialism (21); education (21); unemployment (18); child benefit cuts (17); National Health Service (17); transport (17); incomes policy (15); defence (10); EEC (8); Northern Ireland (5); South Africa (5); industrial democracy (4); the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (2); servicemen's rights (1); police powers (1) and a number of others.

The lay-out of the two agendas is not strictly comparable, but the TUC's agenda includes 44 resolutions on economic policy and organisation plus 14 on industry committees which could well be included in the former figure, making 58 on economic policy. Twenty-two are devoted to social insurance and industrial welfare, 10 to education and 4 international. It is clear from the above that at both conferences economic policy will be the main object of attention, with 58 TUC resolutions and a hundred-odd at the Labour Party Conference.

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Omissions

Certain omissions should be noted. First, much dissatisfaction has been caused by the exclusion from this year's Labour Party agenda of any reference to the growing demand that MPs should stand regularly for readoption, a democratic measure to ensure that MPs do not let their constituents down. Already Messrs Taverne, Eddie Griffiths, Prentice and Tomney have come in for sharp constituency criticism on their record. Though as many as 29 resolutions were submitted on this subject, none have been allowed. If these had been added to the electoral reform and House of Lords batch, the total of 55 would have topped the lot.

Another rather strange omission from both agendas is any direct reference to the wealth tax. It would almost appear to have been dropped, but according to *Labour Weekly* (August 6) it is still a live issue despite Mr Healey's silence, since a 'Royal Commission [has] reported,' and 'action [is] promised.' While the words 'wealth tax' are not included in either agenda, greater taxation of the rich is demanded.

Racialism is prominently featured in the Labour Party agenda with 21 resolutions calling for a firmer policy, but only two resolutions deal with it in the TUC agenda. As to other international matters the submission of resolutions seems somewhat random. Northern Ireland gets five Labour Party resolutions and one at the TUC. South Africa gets five at the Labour Party and none at the TUC. Argentina appears once in both, each time moved by the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, but nothing is said about Brazil or Peru. Chile, the Federal Republic of Germany and Rhodesia are all mentioned in the Labour Party agenda but not for the TUC. And, last but by no means least, the multinationals receive only one resolution in each agenda, while the Labour Party will also have a specific resolution criticising Rio Tinto Zinc.

Although there is only one resolution at each conference on the multinationals they are both well worth while. The Bury and Radcliffe Constituency Labour Party calls on the government to do everything possible to bring the multinationals, 'especially those based outside Britain', under control. It urges greater disclosure of financial information, compulsory conformity with British practice in trade union and industrial relations, and strong international trade union and political co-operation to bring about greater international control. On the TUC agenda, though not in the international section, there is a resolution from the Amalgamated Textile Workers' Union calling for closer ties between trade unionists employed by

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multinational companies, and for the General Council to convene a special conference on the subject involving unions affiliated to both the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). These two resolutions, if both passed, would lay a firm foundation for an all-round offensive by both government and trade unions against the powers of the multinationals.

While employment is the subject of 18 Labour Party resolutions (and covers, of course, unemployment), we find unemployment as the heading of only three resolutions to the TUC. However, as *Tribune* (August 6) pointed out, the subject is dealt with 'directly or indirectly' in 18 resolutions.

In a single Survey it is impossible to cover exhaustively a couple of agendas including 436 (Labour Party) and 211 (TUC) resolutions respectively. The frequency with which items are mentioned is only a rough indication of their importance (why the multinationals only once in each agenda?), to some extent accident plays a part (as when Argentina is specifically raised by the same union at both conferences), and classification itself can account for much, as when 18 employment resolutions for the Labour Party are balanced by three unemployment resolutions for the TUC.

Economic Conditions

If we take the 'economic state of the country' as a main sub-heading, then at least 100 Labour Party resolutions come under this head and at least 60 at the TUC. At both conferences the demand for adequate pensions will play a prominent part. At both conferences the government's incomes policy will receive some support but will also be widely attacked by demands for a return to free collective bargaining and effective control of prices. The nearest approach to a comprehensive socialist-orientated economic policy is presented to the TUC by the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades Union (already quoted). If this policy were adopted by the government, with additions from other resolutions which we mentioned, then the government would probably face defeat in the present parliament. But it would at least have something to go to the country with in an election. It is surprising that *Tribune* (August 6) calls for an autumn election without first ensuring that the government first has credibly established itself with a new policy on the basis of which to rally the country.

Democracy and Peace

At the beginning of this Survey we gave definitions of what is

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meant by socialism from both the Constitution of the Labour Party and from the Constitution of the USSR. Two further points should now be added.

In the days before the first world war the term 'dictatorship of the proletariat' was introduced by Marx and Engels as the antithesis of what they considered to be the then universally existing 'dictatorship of capital'. Under this latter term they included all capitalist governments however 'democratic' they professed to be. And as Lenin pointed out in *State and Revolution* in 1917:

> *Together* with an immense expansion of democracy which *for the first time* becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the rich folk, the dictatorship of the proletariat produces a series of restrictions of liberty in the case of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists.

After the first world war fascist dictatorship came to Italy, then Nazi dictatorship came to Germany, and Franco's dictatorship was imposed on Spain. Many other countries fell to fascist dictatorship: Portugal and Greece, Argentina, Brazil and Chile. The list can be extended endlessly. In the USSR the dictatorship of the proletariat, despite Lenin's clear conception of it, increasingly was transformed into the personal dictatorship of Stalin. The word 'dictatorship' came to be totally discredited. Hence, today, Communist Parties as far apart as France and Japan are abandoning the use of a term which, nowadays, cannot but be misleading.

Therefore, in the definition of socialism as given at the head of this article, the word 'democracy' should definitely feature. In the Labour Party agenda 26 resolutions on electoral reform and the abolition of the House of Lords are included. Another 29 on the renomination of MPs have been excluded. In addition there are resolutions for 'industrial democracy' and 'workers' co-operatives'. At the TUC three resolutions on workers' participation and industrial democracy make clear the same democratic trend.

One of the first decrees of the Soviet government in Russia in 1917 was for 'Peace, Bread and Land'. A 'peace without indemnities or annexations' was immediately called for. From that time to this we have had successive initiatives aimed at 'collective security', 'peaceful coexistence' and 'detente', all of which aim at strengthening the forces aiming at peace. At the Labour Conference there will be 10 resolutions aimed at cutting defence expenditure and strengthening international detente. Alas, there is no corresponding resolution for the TUC.

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An interesting commentary on the two agendas is that the heading 'social contract' appears only once, at the TUC, in which the ACTT resolution referred to above begins: 'Congress rejects the second stage of the social contract and the abandonment of free collective bargaining for a second year.' It has also been announced that eleven members of the Labour Party Executive, acting together, are to issue a statement before the Labour Party Conference opposing the latest instalment of the social contract but giving support to 'Labour's Programme 1976' which Mr Callaghan has already allocated to the category of pie in the sky.

When delegates have to find their way in three or four days through hundreds of resolutions, guided by however good a Standing Orders Committee, it is impossible to forecast exactly what the final pattern will be, and often enough it contains contradictions. But one thing is clear, both at the TUC and at the Labour Party Conference there will be ample material out of which a clear-cut socialist-orientated policy can emerge. If such were the case, and the government were then to adopt such a policy, it might face defeat in the present parliament, but it would at last be equipped with a positive programme, aiming towards socialism, which could rally the country as the first post-war Labour programme did in 1945. **P.S.**

SOCIETY OF GRAPHICAL AND ALLIED TRADES

THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF SOGAT EXTENDS TO ALL WORKERS ITS FRATERNAL GREETINGS. IT PLEDGES ITS CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR POLICIES DIRECTED TO CREATING A DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST SOCIETY.

W. H. KEYS
General Secretary

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DEFENDING THE SOCIAL WAGE

Bernard Dix
Assistant General Secretary
National Union of Public Employees

LAST summer and autumn, when the government was anxious to secure and maintain the support of the labour movement for a policy of limiting wage increases, the concept of the social wage was paraded like a crusader's banner.

The reasons were obvious. It was freely acknowledged by government ministers that the £6 upper limit on pay increases would not match up to the anticipated continued rise in retail prices. The result, overall, would be a fall in real wages and a consequent reduction in the general standard of living. Government supporters argued that such a policy was the only way, in the longer term, to reduce inflation —and that an immediate drop in living standards would be offset by a progressive reduction in the rate of inflation which would provide the stability required as a base for economic expansion and ultimately rising living standards. 'This is a plan to save our country,' was how the White Paper, *The Attack on Inflation*, described the policy; and it warned that if it failed 'the British people will be engulfed in a general economic catastrophe of incalculable proportions.'

Despite this presentation of grim policy options, government supporters recognised that many trade unionists found the remedy prescribed by Healey extremely unpalatable. So they developed the subsidiary argument that unless strict limits on money wages were accepted it would be necessary to cut the social wage. 'Failure to control inflation would mean massive and indiscriminate cuts in public expenditure with crippling damage to the social services,' was how the White Paper set the scene. Government supporters, knowing that their policy meant an inevitable attack on real money wages, therefore became animated and articulate defenders of the social wage.

Harold Wilson, for example, in his speech to the Labour Party Conference at Blackpool last October, attacked what he described as the 'hard faced doctrine' of the Tory Party. The Tories, he said, were saying that 'to get taxation down we have got to cut spending on the social wage—now £20 for every family in Britain.'

'What is this social wage the Tories wanted to attack?' asked

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Wilson. 'It is the Health Service, the kids' education, the people's housing, the help for those in greatest need, including the provision we have made for the disabled and those least able to help themselves.'

Contrasting the 'hard faced doctrine' of the Tories with the policies of the Labour government, Wilson told the Conference delegates that the government was taking action not only to steer Britain through the world economic crisis, 'but also to create, in the words of last year's Manifesto, "a fairer, more democratic and more socially just society".'

Fine words. But a month later Healey was telling the House of Commons that public expenditure would have to be cut in order to finance the required large investment increase in private sector manufacturing industry as economic recovery gained momentum. Three months later this policy projection took on concrete form when the government's February White Paper on public expenditure in the period up to the financial year 1979-80 was published and laid out total cuts in public spending programmes amounting to more than £4,500 million.

Little escaped. Food subsidies, price subsidies to nationalised industries, housing subsidies, education, hospital building, environmental services—all were put on the chopping block in order to fit in with the government's overall economic strategy which gave investment—and profitability—in the manufacturing industry the first priority.

But even this failed to meet the requirements of the government and the voracious appetite of private industry which had become the keystone of government policy. In July, a month after the Special TUC had accepted a further year of even more vigorous wage restraint, Healey announced a further cut of £1,012 million in public expenditure for the year 1977-78. And once again the operation extended over a wide area. A further reduction in food subsidies, increased prices for school meals, higher charges for dental treatment and spectacles, cuts in local authority mortgages and a big reduction in capital expenditure programmes ranging from the nationalised industries to roads and water supply.

This switch of roles by government ministers, from defenders of the social wage to enthusiastic exponents of greater profits in the private sector as the basis for economic progress, did not pass without protest by the Labour left in parliament, notably the 28 vote defeat for the government when members of the Tribune Group abstained from the division during the House of Commons debate on public expenditure cuts in March. Outside parliament, the National

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Executive Committee of the Labour Party have also expressed opposition to cuts in public expenditure, and—in terms of its likely impact on the labour movement as a whole—the draft policy statement, *Labour's Programme 1976*, which will be debated by the Party Conference in Blackpool in September, is probably the most important. This states that, contrary to the government's view, it should be possible to provide for some expansion in public expenditure programmes over the next few years.

> We call on the government to discuss its public expenditure plans frankly and openly with the movement so that decisions on the possibilities and priorities for public expenditure can be reached by consent.

Encouraging though these trends may be, the crucial factor in the whole campaign to reverse the government's attitude towards the social wage is the attitude of the trade unions. In practical terms, as recent debates in the House of Commons have shown, the Tribune Group—while having positive value as an articulate outlet for left wing policies—can be outmanoeuvred by the government's use of parliamentary procedures. The Labour Party NEC—again while acting as an effective outlet for rank and file feeling—are also limited in their effectiveness by the government's insistence that, whatever the NEC or the Labour Party Conference may say, it is 'the government's job to govern.' The trade unions, on the other hand, are in a much stronger position to defend the social wage and insist on a change in government economic strategy to make that possible. Their strength derives from two sources: first, their ability to use their industrial strength to resist some of the cuts in the social wage, such as reductions in the standards of public service; second, the relationship that has developed between the government and the TUC during the construction of the 'social contract' and which the government sees as an important factor in establishing the 'foreign confidence' element of its policy.

The TUC General Council are already equipped with the policy decisions to launch a campaign in defence of the social wage. At last year's Congress at Blackpool a composite resolution was carried, without a single voice or hand raised in opposition, which expressed concern over cuts in public expenditure already announced; declared further cuts would be regarded as an intolerable attack on workers' living standards and a fundamental breach of the social contract; and called on the General Council and all affiliated unions to resist any further cuts which would lower the standards of the social and

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public services. At the Special TUC in June of this year the General Council said, in their report to delegates, that they were strongly urging the government to 'reconsider certain aspects of the public expenditure plans', and they gave the clear warning that they would 'vigorously oppose any further public expenditure cuts.'

It was against this background that representatives of the TUC General Council had a series of meetings with Healey and Callaghan prior to the announcement of the latest cuts in the social wage on July 22. There is little doubt that the government hoped that if it could not get the full support of the TUC it would at least get the 'reluctant acquiescence' which the TUC frequently gives when caught in a contradictory situation. This time, however, the attitude of the TUC had hardened. In a statement issued after the meetings with ministers, the TUC General Council said that they

> must make clear to the government their strong reservations both about the timing of the announcement on public spending and, more important, about aspects of the economic or social justifications of a further substantial prospective reduction in the overall level of public spending.

This was hardly a clarion call to the labour movement to campaign in defence of the social wage (and the remainder of the statement was marked by carefully worded qualifications, such as: 'The General Council believe it is vital to continue to implement the social contract policies and will continue to press for the implementation of these policies against the background of the desire to maintain the Labour government in office').

But, in the context of a situation where the government had anticipated a more positive response, it demonstrated that a realignment of forces was beginning to take place. It is important that this process should be understood and developed.

Previously a significant section of the TUC leadership had adopted, despite the 1975 Congress resolution, a passive attitude towards public expenditure cuts. A combination of pressures from the Treasury, the government and the media, plus their overriding concern for their members who were being hit by growing unemployment in the private sector, led them to accept, subconsciously perhaps, that some reduction in public expenditure was unavoidable and inevitable.

The knowledge that unemployment was continuing to grow and the realisation that the heavy cuts in public expenditure which fell on capital projects would add to the already lengthy dole queue in

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the private sector, such as the construction industry, sharpened the concern of the TUC leadership. The added knowledge that some of the cuts—those falling on food subsidies and school meals, for example—would help to push up prices in a period of strictly limited wage increases made Healey's latest measures even more unacceptable. Finally there was the growing ground-swell of pressure from union branches and regions, in large part due to the campaign waged by some public service unions, which pointed out the direct connection between growing unemployment, declining social wage and living standards and cuts in public expenditure.

These factors (plus an increasing scepticism among TUC leaders that there was any real evidence of the collapse of 'foreign confidence' and the run on sterling, which Healey had used as a justification for further public expenditure cuts) led to the TUC statement which said:

> The General Council have demonstrated in deeds as well as in words the key significance they attach to the sustaining of the social contract. They believe that it is vital for the government to demonstrate that some of the TUC's key priorities are reflected in the government's policy statement.

Again not a clearly worded clarion call for a positive change in government policy, but, nonetheless, evidence of a shift of emphasis by TUC leaders. The crucial task now is to accelerate this trend. At the annual Congress in Brighton this September delegates must emphasise the relationship between public expenditure and the social wage, and use this to demonstrate that cuts in public expenditure are of direct and immediate concern to the whole trade union movement —not just the public service unions. And they must forcibly remind the TUC General Council of the policy so ably expressed in the *TUC Economic Review 1975* which, because it encapsulates the positive attitude needed by the labour movement at this time, merits quotation in full:

> The General Council wish to draw unions' attention to the importance of the 'social wage' that derives from increased social expenditure and which requires growing amounts of resources in inflationary conditions such as the present. It is necessary to place a relatively heavy burden on those with higher incomes, including unearned incomes, towards maintaining, and where possible improving, essential social services—in the health, education, housing and pensions field—which are financed by the tax system rather than the price system. In the case of any particular group of workers, and indeed of society as a whole, the 'social wage' helps the lower paid more than the higher paid, and this is precisely in line with the policy of Congress.

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R. W. BUCKTON
General Secretary

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MICHAEL McGAHEY
President
DAVID BOLTON
Vice-President
WILLIAM McLEAN
General Secretary

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to the

DELEGATES

to the

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THE CITY

Brian Sedgemore MP

THE City of London presents complex problems calling for simple solutions. The first problem is that *laissez-faire* financial institutions, inadequately and inexpertly controlled and supervised by the Bank of England, will always and forever create difficulties for governments in controlling credit, in carrying out sensible monetary policies and in tackling monetary inflation.

The second problem is a paradox. It is that our free enterprise banking sector derives its profits not from entrepreneurial skills but by virtue of high interest rate government policies designed to attract hot money to Britain. These manipulators, warts and all, are also underpinned by the government. In short our banking sector derives its immense power and profits from the government's misunderstanding of the public good.

The third problem is the failure of the British banking and financial system, in contrast with many banking systems elsewhere in the Western world, to provide adequate finance for productive industry. This problem expresses itself on the one hand in finance for productive industry that is too expensive, in finance that requires more collateral and security than is the case with most of our principal competitors, and in the failure of the system to provide sufficient medium and long-term finance for industry. It expresses itself on the other hand in the failure of industrial management in Britain to see the advantages of external financing (i.e., financing investment by bank borrowing rather than wholly or mainly from retained profits) even when interest rates, given the rate of inflation, are negative. It is this failure which prevents any genuine policy of price and profit control by the government. Against this background no one should be surprised to see the paltry contribution shown in Table 1 (p 401) made by banks to industry in 1975.

The fourth problem relates to the irrationality of the Stock Exchange which distorts the direction in which capital funds flow and generally manages to undervalue industrial assets. The Stock Exchange is now a casino and the 'capital market' has long since ceased to be a place where companies can go to raise capital, although truth to tell the 8.3 per cent in Table 1 is some 700 per cent higher than the 1.1 per cent 1973 figure. At the moment new share issues flop one after another. The Borthwick fiasco saw pension funds, insurance companies, banks and unit trusts staying firmly away from the meat trade. A small engineering company, a tobacco

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machinery firm, Molins and a northern house builder fared little better. We have now reached a dangerous situation where neither institutions nor small investors will subscribe to new issues.

The fifth problem, linked to the second, is that of the sterling balances, overseas money banked with British financial institutions but money which is liable to be withdrawn without too much notice.

Most of the banking and financing problems can be solved through the public ownership of the banks, through forcing firms to finance more investment externally from publicly-owned financial institutions and linking this to a coherent policy on prices and profits in industry organised through planning agreements and an extension of government control and ownership.

Slightly more intractable is the problem of the sterling balances. At December 31, 1975, these were as shown in Table 2.

Make no mistake about it these balances are a millstone around the neck of Britain. Interest rates in Britain have to be kept 2½ to 4 per cent higher in London than in the other world financial capitals, in order to attract these balances here, and industry which has to borrow at these higher rates suffers in consequence. Moreover, the very existence of these sterling balances and the fear, whether justified or not, that they might be moved creates uncertainty and makes it easy for dealers, individuals, treasurers of multinational companies and others to speculate against sterling. It is precisely because those who hold sterling have to guard against this ever-present risk that they will only do so at a discount—of anything up to 10 per cent. In other words, sterling tends to be valued at up to 10 per cent less than what sound commercial judgement would suggest it should be, and it is of course the British people who pay for that discount in higher food and raw material prices and lower living standards.

But worse than all of this, when we do get runs on the pound—and this has been the *annus mirabilis* for such speculation—the British government has to react by borrowing from the IMF and other sources, invariably with strings attached. Nobody should be fooled by the fact that these strings are not always expressly stated. They are there—as they were with the $5.3 billion stand-by credit recently arranged and quickly followed by public expenditure cuts—and are perfectly well understood. Usually they mean depressing the economy through deflationary measures, forcing up unemployment and cutting public expenditure.

One cannot begin to justify the existence of these balances by

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claiming that they contribute towards the City's invisible earnings. Banking services provide a mere 5 per cent of the nation's invisible earnings and 'hot money' earnings provide only a small proportion of that.

For everyone's sake (the holders of the balances, those who manage other currencies and Britain) these balances should now be funded through the IMF or some other international organisation. Under this arrangement the holders of these balances would exchange them for reserves from the IMF whilst Britain would discharge its obligations by paying off the IMF over a 50 or 100 year period. We could then get on with the business of dealing with the central economic problems that beset the nation. We could forget the City.

TABLE 1

Sources of capital funds of industrial and commercial companies 1975

	£ million	% of total
Undistributed income	8,682	66.4
Bank borrowing	710	5.4
UK capital issues by listed companies	1,089	8.3
Overseas	1,031	7.9
Other	1,563	12.0
TOTAL	13,075	100.0

(Financial Statistics, April 1976, p 93)

TABLE 2

Foreign sterling balances (in £ million), by holder at December 31, 1975

	Exchange reserves in sterling held by central monetary institutions	Banking and money market liabilities to holders other than central monetary institutions	Total
EEC	125	774	899
Oil-exporting countries ..	2,839	462	3,301
Other countries	731	1,993	2,724
International organisations	386	not applicable	386
All overseas holders ..	4,081	3,229	7,310

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THE NATIONAL UNION OF DYERS, BLEACHERS AND TEXTILE WORKERS

sends fraternal greetings to all TUC delegates

F. DYSON
General Secretary

National House
Sunbridge Road
Bradford, BD1 2QB

THE ONLY UNION FOR ALL TEXTILE WORKERS

THE SOUTH WALES AREA OF THE NUM CONVEY TO ALL DELEGATES AT THE TUC CONFERENCE THEIR FRATERNAL GREETINGS. WE HOPE FOR A FRUITFUL AND SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE IN OUR STRUGGLE TO ACHIEVE SOCIALISM.

EMLYN WILLIAMS, *President*
W. H. THOMAS, *Vice-President*
GEORGE REES, *General Secretary*

THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

EXTENDS FRATERNAL GREETINGS TO ALL DELEGATES ATTENDING THE 108th ANNUAL CONGRESS OF THE TUC AND TO THE MEMBERS THEY REPRESENT

Enoch Humphries
President

Terence Parry
General Secretary

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NUR AWAKES!

Jock Nicolson
Executive Committee member
National Union of Railwaymen

IT is just over a year since Sidney Weighell took over the general secretaryship of the National Union of Railwaymen on the retirement of Lord Greene, and at this year's annual conference in July he was amply able to demonstrate that already a whole series of initiatives had been taken to shake the NUR out of its torpor of recent years and turn it into a 'pace-maker' on the railways and in the trade union movement generally.

Head Office has been completely reorganised to correspond with the changes in transport which have put one-third of the Union's membership in undertakings outside the railways, such as road freight, buses and docks. A new research department had been set up, which, in addition to providing a vast range of information for everyday use in negotiations, has enabled the NUR to be the first organisation to produce a comprehensive alternative transport strategy to that contained in the government's recent *Consultation Document*.

A luxurious residential college had been completed, and there are ambitious ideas to extend and improve the range and quality of the Union's education.

On the political front the NUR has increased its parliamentary representation from six to ten sponsored MPs with the immediate objective of raising this to eighteen. This year's conference approved further measures to strengthen the Union's influence in the Labour Party, including a change of rules making it mandatory for every branch to affiliate to at least one Constituency Labour Party.

Within the industry the Union has shown that it was prepared to use its muscles when necessary. The previous summer the executive had voted for strike action in support of their claim for pay increases in line with the miners—and won. More recently they took on the Docks Board and after one week's work to rule achieved a compulsory trade union agreement. A similar agreement was won following an ultimatum to British Transport Hotels, making trade union history in the hotel and catering industry. A couple of weeks before the conference the National Freight Corporation had been warned that further staff reductions or depot closures would be met by industrial action.

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So there is no doubt that the Union is on the move. At the same time the conference revealed that massive problems remain unsolved, particularly in relation to job security, and in many areas there is a pent up feeling of frustration.

In one important area the leadership had to report that their initiative had met with no success. This concerned their efforts towards railway trade union unity. The proposal for a loose federation with the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) and the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA) had been rejected. It is unfortunate that there has been no positive response, for with the NUR in its present 'go ahead' mood relations with the other two unions cannot remain where they were before. The NUR will now insist on its predominant position as the largest union.

The dominating issue at this year's conference was the threat to the future of the railways posed by the government's *Consultation Document* on transport.* This has been a chronic issue since the sixties when Beeching slashed the railway network with a consequent reduction in manpower of more than 50 per cent. The Union's policy statement† pointed out that the investment cuts announced at the beginning of the year would lead to poorer services and the possibility of massive cuts in the railway network, leaving little more than inter-city routes and the connurbation services. It pinpointed the outrageous bias in the government's document. The railways are ordered to eliminate their £66 million freight deficit by 1978, but of the much greater concealed subsidy to road haulage it said that these would have to be phased out over a longer period to give the 'road haulage industry and the vehicle manufacturers time to adjust to the changes.'

Peter Shore, Secretary of State for the Environment, was present during the debate. It took place on the same day that the newspapers first came out with the story that he was leading the battle in the cabinet against Healey's proposal for a further £1,000 million cuts in public spending. Perhaps significantly, in reply to the charge that John Peyton, the former Tory Transport Minister, had been more 'sympathetic' to the railways than the Labour government, he replied that there was no sense in his approving an investment level that would later be cut by the Chancellor as had happened with Peyton.

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* *Transport Policy: A Consultation Document*, HMSO: Vol 1, £1.35; Vol 2, £1.70; April 1976.

† *A Policy for Transport: Submissions to the Secretary of State for the Environment from the National Union of Railwaymen on the Consultation Document*, NUR, July 1976.

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While giving a qualified assurance that there would be no major cuts in the railway network, he appeared to go very little beyond the thinking in the *Consultation Document* that competition between road and rail should be made a bit 'fairer' by charging road haulage their proper costs.

Since then the Railway Board has published its comments§ on the document. Theirs is a very different statement from what the rail unions had been expecting. While arguing for a higher and stable level of investment it concedes that '10 per cent of passenger train miles are capable of replacement by bus services,' and proposes a further 20 per cent reduction in manpower by 1981. (Already between 1950 and 1973 railway manpower had been cut by 57 per cent.) The Board appears to accept the dictum of 'fairer' competition. This is a devastating statement and undermines the position of the unions, whose concept is of a planned co-ordinated transport system, not competition.

Besides, the whole meaning of the Callaghan-Healey new line is discrimination against the public sector through investment cuts, while encouraging profitability and investment in the private sector. More than a quarter of a century's experience of the partial nationalisation of transport, within a mixed economy where the private sector dominates, proves beyond all dispute that it is the public sector that will lose out. In fact what is happening even under a Labour government is a massive process of denationalisation.

The great gap in this year's conference was that it failed to see the threat to the railways as only one aspect of the wholesale retreat of the government from its *Manifesto* promises. It accepted that public spending cuts were unavoidable but necessary to beat inflation, but wanted the railways exempted as a special case.

In this connection the debate on the Social Contract was of particular interest. It was a full and fair debate with powerful speeches by both sides: 22 of the 77 delegates took part, ten for and twelve against. Those in support claimed that an increase in commodity prices was the moral debt we owed the third world countries; that there was no practical alternative to the government's policy to combat inflation; that wage regulation was more socially just than free collective bargaining, and favoured the lower paid; that opposition would end in the downfall of the Labour government and lead to a vicious Tory backlash; that in any case we would otherwise be totally isolated from the rest of the trade union movement and faced

§ *Transport Policy, An Opportunity for Change: Comments by British Railways Board on the Government Consultation Document*, July 1976.

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with a series of unequal battles that we could never hope to win.

The opponents of the Contract argued that the crisis was a product of capitalism and could only be remedied by socialist policies; that it meant higher profits at the expense of the workers with no guarantee that investment would go where it was most needed; that the end-product would be the alienation of the workers and eventual electoral victory for the Tories.

In the end the delegates voted 54 for the Social Contract and 22 against. But it would be a complete misreading of the situation to see this as a triumph of the right over the left. Nor would it be correct to describe the supporters as irredeemable reformists or capitalist-roaders. The situation is more complicated than that. At the same time it raises the political question: Why have the majority of trade unionists endorsed a policy that appears to conflict with their immediate and long-term interests?

Basically, it stems from a feeling of political isolation and weakness. They see the Labour government as beleaguered, with its back to the wall, facing a still more powerful Tory Party backed up by a hostile Western Europe and America with all their paraphernalia for exercising pressure.

No doubt the swing to the left in France, Italy and Spain will in time help to restore the confidence of the labour movement in Britain that radical socialist advance is possible. In the short term the great and pressing problems that face railwaymen will compel them increasingly to challenge the entire basis of government policy. The future is with the left.

LABOUR MONTHLY FIFTY YEARS AGO

All the experience of the past, all the driving force of events, has led with inescapable compulsion to the necessity of mass action. The alternative to facing this is the surrender and capitulation of the trade union movement, the succession of sectional defeats and the successive reduction of wages and worsening of conditions. But mass action raises new needs and tasks. . . . It necessitates a leadership which shall not shrink before the political and constitutional issues raised by mass action, or expect to solve the conflicts of capitalist decline by the old methods of trade union bargaining, but shall face the character of the present period, and lead forward to direct attacks on capitalist ownership and control, eventually to lead to the direct attack on capitalist class power itself.

(From 'Notes of the Month' by RPD, *Labour Monthly*, September 1926)

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JIM GARDNER

(August 3, 1893—July 20, 1976)

Jim Gardner was born near Glasgow and started work at the age of 14 in a small brass foundry. At 16 he joined the Glasgow Northern Branch of the Associated Iron Moulders of Scotland. A year later he began his political career which was to last throughout his lifetime.

Before the first world war he joined the Independent Labour Party. He was extremely active, and in 1920 became the local chairman of the newly formed Communist Party. In the early twenties he was victimised by the employers for his political views. He continued to play a very active part on behalf of the Communist Party, and in later years served as a member of the Executive Committee.

During the second world war he was employed by the Petroleum Board, but continued to play an extremely active role in the affairs of the union. He became district secretary in Scotland following the death of Jock McBain in January 1941. It was at this time that Bro Gardner wrote a pamphlet on the reconstruction of the union and advocated amalgamation as a first step towards reconstructing the National Union of Foundry Workers.

Following the death of Bro Albert Wilkie in 1944, Bro Gardner was elected General Secretary. He then concerned himself with three main issues—the wages question, the problems of amalgamation, and the issues of health and safety at a time of considerable technological change. Those who knew him well recall that he was a prodigious worker and did not spare himself in his efforts to create a new union for foundry workers.

Although I did not share his political convictions, as National Organiser I had many opportunities of discussing with him the burning issues of the day. I can personally testify to his sincerity and political integrity, and his unshakeable conviction that in the long run socialism would triumph.

It can be said that he was a man who continuously advocated his political beliefs and lived his life fighting to achieve his ideals of a new society. His political and industrial contribution will be remembered by all who knew him. We extend to his daughter and family our condolences and deepest sympathy.

R. Garland, General Secretary, AUEW Foundry Section

Jim Gardner's contributions to *Labour Monthly* include: *Why These Strikes?* (1946), *Production in the Foundry* (1947), *The Wage Freeze* and *Why We Want Peace with the Soviet Union* (1948), *German Competition and British Living Standards* (1949), *Trades Union Congress 1952* (1952), *Are Wages High Enough?* (1954), *War on the Unions* (1957), *The Metalworkers' Wages* (1958), *Intelligent Voter's Guide* (1959), *For a World Without War* (1960), *Public Ownership* (1962) and *Trade Union Growth* (1963).

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NATIONAL UNION OF MINEWORKERS

YORKSHIRE AREA

EXTENDS FRATERNAL GREETINGS TO
ALL FELLOW TRADE UNIONISTS
THROUGHOUT GREAT BRITAIN
AND THE WORLD

A. SCARGILL	J. T. LEIGH	R. HORBURY	O. BRISCOE
President	*Vice-president*	*Fin. Secretary*	*Gen. Secretary*

WHO'S TURNING THE HANDLE?

GREETINGS TO CONGRESS DELEGATES
No 8 DIVISIONAL COUNCIL ASSOCIATION OF
SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL STAFFS

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SOUTH VIETNAM 1976

(*In our June issue we published an interview between staff members of the* Vietnam Courier *and Dr Nguyen Khac Vien about his tour of south Vietnam. In response to widespread interest we publish here a further excerpt from his interview.*—Ed. *LM*)

Question—Could you give us some idea of the social problems to be tackled?

Answer—I can deal particularly with neo-colonialist society, especially that created by the US intervention. I say 'created', because this was a society implanted deliberately by Washington according to a methodical plan. Their first step was the 'forcible urbanisation' of about ten million of the rural population. The urban population of south Vietnam made up only 15 per cent of the total in 1960. It rose to 45 per cent in 1974, and as much as 65 per cent when various regroupment centres and displaced persons' camps are included. Such a figure should be expected only in a highly industrialised country, not in south Vietnam which, properly speaking, had virtually no industry at all. The traditional pattern of Vietnamese society was thus completely disrupted, and some 12 to 15 million people were subjected to an intensive 'conditioning' covering a number of years.

Question—What did this 'conditioning' mean?

Answer—Relations with the patriotic and revolutionary movement were prohibited by bombings, massacres and inhuman tortures, in the same way that a guinea-pig in a maze receives an electric shock as soon as it takes the wrong turning. Further conditioning: the guinea-pig, as soon as it heads in the right direction, receives a reward in the form of some titbit. Those who accepted the neo-colonialist regime and were willing to serve US policy as mercenaries, policemen and administrative employees or, better still, those who 'played ball' by positively aiding the regime, becoming army officers or comprador ideologists, gained immediate access to the delights of the 'consumer society'. The $600 or $700 million-worth of commercial aid, and the several hundred million dollars spent by the various services and troops of the United States, enabled the regime to import about $1,000 million-worth of goods each year, and everyone joining in the game got a share in proportion to his services.

Question—So, only a minority could have these advantages?

Answer—Yes, only a minority were granted these top privileges. But it would be a mistake to say that the population as a whole were

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kept out. A million US dollars was an enormous sum to be absorbed by the economy of a small country with very little industry. Crumbs of the American manna fell all around. In Saigon you find TV sets and refrigerators almost everywhere, even in crowded squatter areas, where a dense population lives under galvanised iron roofs, or in houses on stilts along waterways filled with rubbish and waste of all sorts, where cholera cases are still reported from time to time. Everybody, from the president of the Republic to a pedicab driver, might expect a bit from this deluge of goods. Privileged persons would get the latest and most expensive articles from the West, and would resell them as soon as new gadgets appeared on the Western market. These goods, from highly industrialised countries, were bought for cash by the middle strata, resold when no longer in vogue, finally landing up in those hovels and shanties where one would not normally expect to find them.

Question—What was the effect of all this on the various strata of society?

Answer—Children and young people were more easily affected by this pressure. They came to believe it was obligatory to dress out of Western fashion magazines, to adopt Western hairstyles, and to change whenever fashions changed in the West. We have talked about drugs (heroin and marijuana) but the race for new consumer articles is also a drug. Take Honda motor-bikes. A convenient means of conveyance in a growing city, the Honda became for those young people a means of asserting themselves.

Question—What did the Americans want?

Answer—Having to recruit mercenaries and policemen to replace the costly GIs, Washington got going an effective drafting apparatus and powerful police machinery to deal with recalcitrants. The only people who could escape were those in touch with the national and revolutionary movement, and what the Americans aimed to do was to keep young people away from this movement and empty their brains of all national, revolutionary ideas in order to gather them like ripe fruit. A man who dreamed day and night of a Honda, a refrigerator or a Mercedes was one man less for the revolutionary movement, and the day would come when he would enrol of his own free will in Thieu's army or police to get the necessary money or, if he was caught during a sweep, he would not have the courage to resist forcible conscription or to say 'No' to a military machine which made him shoot his own brothers and friends. This conditioning by merchandise cost Washington only $2 billion a year as against the $30 billion required to keep GIs in Vietnam.

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Many young people boasted that they were both anti-American and anti-communist, but as far as Washington was concerned what really mattered was that these people should be kept away from the revolutionary movement through their anti-communism. What was most striking was the profusion of religious organisations, churches and sects which flourished.

Question—What was the reason for that?

Answer—The war had been going on for years, leaving an endless trail of death and destruction. Even the most scientific minds could not help thinking in terms of fate and destiny when they contemplated the future. Hence the development of religions with a strong element of superstition, soothsaying and horoscopes. In twenty years of US intervention there was a proliferation of churches and pagodas, of Catholic, Protestant, Caodaist, Buddhist, Hoa Hao, and B'hai shrines. Huge statues of Christ, the Virgin Mary and Buddha were erected on hilltops, and religions vied with one another to put up colleges, seminaries and charity institutions.

Question—Which religion thrived the most then?

Answer—Buddhism seemed to, but actually Catholicism did. It formed the backbone of the regime from Ngo Dinh Diem to Nguyen Van Thieu, both being Catholic, as were the majority of the senior officers, provincial chiefs, senators and other representatives. Under Ngo Dinh Diem the Catholic Church was openly triumphant, displaying all its pomp and ceremony. Under Nguyen Van Thieu it became more discrete, but still maintained all its privileges. Buddhism showed spectacular development at times, because to many people this was an expression of nationalism, a protest against foreign intervention and against the domination of Catholicism. Now that all aspirations for peace and independence have come true with liberation, Buddhism is undergoing a decline.

Question—Were there other ways of conditioning people besides those you have mentioned?

Answer—It was US policy to set up innumerable social, cultural, artistic, sports, youth, popular, ethnic or local organisations intended to make people feel attached to the regime in one way or another. This network of organisations was directly connected with the police apparatus. The regime had under its control a police force of some 200,000 men equipped with weapons of the most modern kind, ready to crack down ruthlessly upon opponents.

Question—What was the result of all these elaborate methods?

Answer—The national and revolutionary movement has finally triumphed. This is because people, although they can be conditioned

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by the situation and circumstances they live in, are none the less conscious, active beings. The military and police apparatuses, the American conditioning machinery, for all their vast scale and sophistication, were confronted with a conscious, organised people, inspired by a vigorous national tradition and conducting a struggle under the leadership of an experienced Marxist party. But the American impact has been profound and US neo-colonialism has left behind serious consequences which it will take much time and effort to remove.

Question—To what extent have the effects of the old regime already been overcome?

Answer—One can say that the liberation in itself has had a great cleansing effect. My Saigonese friends believe that superstition, prostitution, drug addiction, those pervading ills of the old regime, have been reduced by at least half. One Catholic priest spoke of his delight at seeing this transformation of social life.

Former drug addicts and prostitutes are becoming active in the re-education movement. A ban on pornographic films and literature has helped to change people's attitudes. To people from the north, however, the prevalence of superstition and the number of street fortune-tellers is still surprising.

Question—What are the main reforms and innovations since liberation?

Answer—There is first of all an atmosphere of justice, equality and brotherhood, entirely different from before. People have come to know members of the liberation army, revolutionary personnel and leaders, men and women who have nothing in common with the soldiers and officials of the old days; and all the anti-communist slogans and myths cultivated for years by US propaganda suddenly look like phantoms. All of a sudden communist 'torturers' and 'devils' are here to stay: and they are none other than your brothers, cousins, friends and neighbours. As combatants they may be tough, but they are friendly and devoted people, ready to give a hand to peasants building a canal, to help an old or handicapped person at harvest time. They claim nothing for themselves, accepting privation rather than upset people. There are, of course, always some soldiers or cadres who behave arrogantly, who have become corrupted, but they are rare exceptions. People know that the majority of the cadres and combatants, with whom they are in contact every day, are truly 'Uncle Ho's soldiers', modelled more or less on the image of the beloved, venerated leader.

The campaign against illiteracy and the setting up of an effective

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medical network take care even of the poorest strata. The popular touring film, theatre and song and dance teams reach even the remotest hamlets. These mean the prospect of building a free, prosperous country, which is the only way to solve so many of the present difficulties.

Question—What is the reaction of intellectuals in Saigon?

Answer—It is highly unlikely that a patriotic Vietnamese intellectual would contemplate a future based on capitalism. Since it is now clear that only socialism can bring out the creative energies of the people, and since the great majority of them are first and foremost patriots, these intellectuals are being gradually won over by socialist ideology. Indeed, many of them came and expressed their satisfaction to me regarding the scientific and technological revolution, seen by the Vietnam Workers' Party as the centre of its policy. Many are impressed by the way that national culture in the north, far from being stifled by socialism or destroyed by US bombs, has been enriched with modern ideas. I believe that the great majority of intellectuals will be able to take the present difficulties in their stride and will throw themselves into the building of a reunified and socialist Vietnam.

Question—To what extent can international aid be used in rebuilding the country?

Answer—We cannot be grateful enough to our comrades and friends in all countries for their support and assistance during the war. Today our difficulties are immense. We are short of everything: building materials, medicines, paper to print textbooks for our children, fuel, equipment and so on. We lack skilled technicians and qualified scientists. Our friends abroad can help us in many ways. We think that the essential factor is the efforts of our own people. But there is no doubt that international aid is important in helping to speed up our work of reconstruction and in reducing the privations of our people.

SOLLY SACHS

Solly Sachs, who occasionally contributed to our columns, most recently in April this year, died on July 30. Solly Sachs was the general secretary of the Garment Workers' Union of South Africa until he was forced to leave that country in 1953. Since then he has been resident in Britain, a member of the Labour Party, a keen fighter for democracy in South Africa and unity of the left in Britain. We deeply regret his passing.

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CHANGE IN ITALY

Giuseppe Vacca*

THE primary characteristic of the Italian political system, what we may call its most peculiar feature, is the existence of a rich and varied political landscape, to the point, as some foreign observers have maintained, of being fragmented. There are seven parties and most of them play a definite role in the making of government or in opposition: the neo-fascist party and the Liberal Party on the right; the Christian Democratic Party, the Social Democratic Party and the Republican Party in the centre; the Socialist Party and Communist Party on the left.

During the seventies, the distribution of their percentages was approximately as follows: the Italian Social Movement (the neo-fascist party), 9 per cent; the Italian Liberal Party, 4 per cent; the Christian Democratic Party, 39 per cent; the Republican Party, 3 per cent; the Social Democratic Party, 5 per cent; the Socialist Party, 10 per cent; the Communist Party, 27 per cent.

In the June general election the distribution of percentages changed and is now: neo-fascist party about 6 per cent; the Liberal Party, 1.3 per cent; the Christian Democratic Party, 38.7 per cent; the Republican Party, 3.1 per cent; the Social Democratic Party, 3.4 per cent; the Socialist Party, 9.6 per cent; the Communist Party, 34.4 per cent. Moreover, for the first time, two small, new parties participated in the poll: the Proletarian Democracy and the Radical Party. Both are left-wing parties and they polled respectively 1.5 and 1.1 per cent.

This was a remarkable shift to the left. It amounts to about 9 per cent, the main share of which is due to the increase of the Communist Party's vote by about 7 per cent.

This is something new in the Italian political system. First of all, the increase for the Communist Party is the largest for thirty years: three million, six hundred thousand more votes than in 1972, when the last general election took place. Among MPs the Communist Party gained 70 deputies. All other parties lost seats. The largest losses were in the neo-fascist, the Liberal and the Social Democratic Parties, but the Christian Democratic Party also lost four seats.

But what is a new development is the mobility of the voters. For the first time since the end of fascism, the left-wing parties have reached about 47 per cent. To some extent, the Christian Democratic

* Giuseppe Vacca, who is a Communist Deputy to the Italian parliament, contributed this article following a visit to Britain in July 1976.

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Party is now compelled to share the government of the country.

It must be underlined that during the last thirty years there has been no possibility for alternation between the majority and the opposition at the head of government. This was due to several factors, both international and national in their nature.

After the war, up to 1947, Italy was ruled by coalitions of all the anti-fascist parties that co-operated in the reconstruction of the country. But, as a sequel to the 'cold war', the country was split in two. During the fifties Italy was ruled by coalitions of centre parties (the Christian Democratic Party, the Liberal Party, the Republican Party and the Social Democratic Party). Since the Communist Party was the main opposition party, the pivot of these coalitions and of all Italian political life was a permanent anti-communist campaign as the instrument of mass mobilisation. This was led by the Catholic Church which, during the fifties, provided the main mass support for the Christian Democratic Party.

A mass consensus in anti-communist ideology characterised the sixties. During the sixties and up to now, Italy has been ruled by centre-left coalitions, involving the Socialist Party. But during this period of Italian political life, the Christian Democratic Party succeeded in imposing anti-communist discrimination. Anti-communism broke down only last year, after the big shift to the left in our regional elections of June 15 and 16, 1975, and after the Socialist Party, at its last national conference, decided to put an end to its political co-operation with the Christian Democratic Party unless the Communist Party was also involved in a leading role in the government.

Up to now, anti-communism has been the principal obstacle to the alternation of majority and opposition at the head of the government. As the Communist Party is the main working class and opposition party in Italy, this effectively allowed the Christian Democratic Party to rule the country for thirty years without interruption. And, as the anti-communist discrimination imposed by the Christian Democratic Party was accepted by all the other parties that shared the partnership of national government, this contributed to a further peculiarity of the Italian political system: what we call the Christian Democratic 'regime'. The Christian Democratic Party was able to monopolise about 80 per cent of ruling positions, for its own people, not only in the government, but also in the public sector of the economy, in schools and universities, in public administration, in the banks (which in Italy mainly belong to the public sector of the economy), in the health system, in social security, law and so on.

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These are the main features of what we call the Christian Democratic 'regime'. These are the main characteristics of the Italian political system for the last thirty years. This is what has definitely ended as a result of the latest election.

Day by day during the seventies, the Italian crisis has become deeper. The economic crisis began in 1971 and depended on a contradictory economic pattern of development carried on by the ruling classes. During the fifties and sixties there was the greatest intensive economic development in Italy's history. This was obtained thanks to the lowest wages in Europe, the lowest percentage of employment and the decisive role of the external market and exports. As a result, Italy reached a unique place among the most developed countries while suffering a structural scientific and technological gap. The underdevelopment of southern Italy, half the country, was not overcome. On the contrary, in certain ways, it became a permanent factor of imbalance for the entire economy. When, at the end of the sixties, the working class reached a condition of full employment and by means of strikes and other actions imposed levels of wages equal to those held in other European countries, the Italian economy entered on a permanent, structural crisis. The ruling class and the leading parties instead of changing the economic pattern of development, instead of trying to overcome the technological gap and to correct the failings of the internal market, chose an economic policy of stop-go, inflation and stagnation with monetary manoeuvring led by the Central Bank.

When, at the end of 1973, the international economic crisis hit Italy quite hard, it initiated a bitter period of crisis, actually dangerous to the economic and political equilibrium of the country. For the first time since the second world war, in 1975 industrial production fell about 13 per cent. At the end of 1976, after three years of inflation, prices will have increased by 25 per cent. More than one million people are jobless and eight hundred thousand young people are in search of their first jobs. Most of them live in southern Italy and are educated people with a degree or a diploma.

Our balance of payments is negative. Our debt to Western countries is 17 billion dollars. The public administration debt is 25,000 billion Italian lire. Less than 33 per cent of the active population is employed.

In such a deadlock situation deep changes in the nature of economic development and in the political leadership of the country are urgently needed. It is necessary to change the economic relationship of Italy with the international market, with the most advanced

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countries as well as with the producers of oil and raw materials. It is a *must* to correct our economic pattern of development. Deep reforms are needed, especially in agriculture, to enlarge the productive basis of our economy, to fight unemployment and to solve the balance of payments problem.

Furthermore, in order to achieve such aims, the co-operation of the working class movement in the economic policy of the government and the participation of working class parties in the political leadership of the country is a necessary, vital and inescapable condition.

That is why, during the general elections, the Communist Party suggested a government of broad coalition, to master and defeat the crisis. We pointed out to the voters the necessity of a government of national and democratic solidarity, supported by all the anti-fascist parties.

The Christian Democratic Party still states that it will never share government with the Communist Party. But the Socialist Party agrees on the analysis of the crisis and the political solution that we suggest. Before the election public opinion polls showed that more than 60 per cent of the voters declared that the co-operation of the Communist Party at government level was necessary in order to surmount the crisis.

Given the result of the poll, it is likely that the majority of voters support our political standpoint. It is impossible to maintain discrimination against a Communist Party that gets about 13 million votes. The price would be the collapse of democracy, no less. Besides, there is an influential minority within the Christian Democratic Party, perhaps 30 per cent, which is convinced of the necessity to co-operate with the Communist Party in order to find a democratic solution to the crisis.

Benigno Zaccagnini, the left-wing leader elected general secretary of the Christian Democratic Party at the last party conference in March, has stated that his party is ready to meet all other democratic parties, including the Communist Party, to discuss and come to an agreement on the government programme. A general agreement among all anti-fascist parties has allowed a Communist, Comrade Pietro Ingrao, for the first time in Italian history to be elected speaker of the Chamber of Deputies.

A political campaign and a large mass movement is now developing to force the Christian Democratic Party to take a new political line and to give a new leadership to the country, supported by the main democratic and popular parties, first and foremost the Communist Party and the Socialist Party.

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THE NEW STOCKHOLM APPEAL

John Atkinson
Education Secretary
London Co-operative Society
Education Department

FROM its earliest beginnings the British Co-operative Movement has advocated peace as a prerequisite for development. The International Co-operative Alliance, an organisation which has 326 million affiliated members in 66 countries is actively following a similar line. The ICA Congress in Warsaw in October 1972 passed unanimously a very meaningful resolution on this topic. It is, therefore, no accident that the London Co-op Education Department has adopted the theme of Co-operation for Peace, as the next ICA Congress prepares to meet in Paris in September 1976.

Meetings will be held throughout the trading area of the London Co-op to give publicity and win support for the New Stockholm Appeal. This appeal has already been signed by eleven Labour MPs, by the Nobel Laureate Dr R. L. M. Synge and by a large number of trade union leaders. The text reads in part:

> The victories for peace and detente have created a new international climate, new hopes, new confidence, new optimism among the peoples.
>
> Peace can be defended. A world of peace can be built.
>
> The unity of peace forces has the power to overcome the obstacles which still remain along the road towards a new world, from which aggression, exploitation and domination, hunger and poverty will be banished for all time.
>
> The principal obstacle to making the process of detente irreversible is the arms race.
>
> The arms race still threatens our planet with nuclear destruction. With detente this threat has begun to recede . . . .
>
> The arms race weighs heavily on the shoulders of vast masses of peoples in many countries of the world—who are faced with an ever-soaring cost of living, inflation and economic crisis. It robs the peoples of a great part of their wealth and resources.
>
> Detente has opened up fresh prospects for victories in the struggles for a new international economic order, for the rights of the peoples to the riches of their own soil. It is a weapon in the fight for ending the plunder by monopolies and multinational corporations. . . .
>
> Detente creates new possibilities for the solution of the most urgent international problems of the day, for the liquidation of the hotbeds of tension and conflict; the ending of the arms race would open the road to mankind's goal: prohibition of all nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, general and complete disarmament—a world without arms.
>
> World public opinion has greater responsibility and greater power than

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ever before. It can turn the tide against the armaments profiteers, the cold warriors, the enemies of mankind.

The World Peace Council appeals to all governments and parliaments, all peace and other movements, to political parties, trade unions, women's and youth organisations, to religious, social and cultural bodies which are engaged in endeavours for mankind's advance, to join hands in a great new world-wide offensive against the arms race. . . .

The arms race has reached unprecedented proportions, particularly in two aspects. First, there is such an enormous accumulation of lethal fire-power that humanity and civilisation could be destroyed many times over. There is also the economic drain on society that this entails. In 1973 the nations of the world were spending $30 million per hour on the armed forces and armaments (about 300 billion dollars annually). In 1973 an estimated 460 million people, 12 per cent of the world's population, were suffering from severe malnutrition. For an estimated $4 billion annually 200 million undernourished children could be provided special feeding programmes.

The opponents of disarmament belong to well-defined social groups and organisations. They try to block all practical steps designed to slow down the arms race. Some even continue to pollute the earth's atmosphere with the fall-out from nuclear weapon tests. Multinational corporations engage in arms production, which increases their profits and increasingly strengthens their role. In this respect more than any other, the power of these companies represents a serious risk to the independence of states.

The economic imbalance, to which this deep-rooted militarisation of the economy gives rise, also to a certain extent leads some workers, qualified personnel and engineers, to attribute their job stability to military production. The fear of unemployment, and sometimes its reality in some particular arms industry, leads groups of workers concerned to see the maintenance of arms production as positive when a local plant is threatened. This is being used by those opposed to ending the arms race to organise campaigns against a mere slowing down in arms production.

Would disarmament cause unemployment? The contrary is the case. The United States of America has the biggest arms industry in the world and yet it has one of the highest rates of unemployment. Several very authoritative reports commissioned by the United Nations have indicated that the economic problems accompanying the disarmament process could be solved by all societies and that they would be much eased in an atmosphere of international co-

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operation. Also it is worth remembering what American author Seymour Melman wrote in 1970: 'Competence for industrial conversion to civilian work is a precondition for the ability to consider peace and disarmament proposals on their own merits.'

Many positive proposals made in the disarmament field come up against a refusal to negotiate because of a lack of coherent plans to convert the arms industry. What is needed is a reordering of priorities. Workers producing ball bearings for tanks could be producing them for buses if the government decided to expand public transport. If the government decides to make a serious drive at house, school and hospital building, using prefabricated parts in some cases, workers in many industries, but especially in the aircraft industry, and many now unemployed, will find a job.

World military expenditure, according to UN statistics, exceeds more than 20 times the total assistance rendered to developing countries. Military expenditure amounts to 3.5 per cent of gross national product in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, while the figure for the health service is one per cent.

At the present stage, developing countries consider the struggle to end the arms race and to bring about disarmament as one of their main tasks. The non-aligned Summits were instrumental in proclaiming the 1970s as a 'disarmament decade', and they rendered total support for the idea of convening a World Disarmament Conference.

At the beginning of the sixties, all UN member states unanimously agreed that disarmament should be general and complete and that war should no longer be an instrument for settling international problems; and that the programme for general and complete disarmament should ensure that states would have at their disposal only such non-nuclear armaments, forces, facilities and establishments as are agreed to be necessary to maintain internal order and to protect citizens' personal security.

Unfortunately, the reality of the present international situation so far excludes the possibility of reaching our final goal of general and complete disarmament in one step. In this situation, partial measures have been taken which contribute to the final solution of the disarmament problem and consolidate political and military detente in the world.

Among these one could mention the Moscow Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, outer space and under water; the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons; the treaties banning the installation of weapons of mass destruction in

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space and on the sea bed; the convention banning biological weapons and the series of Soviet-US agreements aiming at the limitation of strategic arms and the prevention of nuclear war.

World public opinion has to ensure that partial disarmament measures should not only be effective but should cover the maximum number of states. This is the only way to clear the road to general and complete disarmament. Apart from the political gains which will lead to tremendous advances for mankind if the arms race is stopped, the main gains will be attained in the economic and social spheres. The United Nations has presented a list of conversion options including:

—chemical and biological warfare into high-yield varieties of staple food, edible protein, pest and vector control, communicable disease control, toxological research and cancer research.

—nuclear military programmes into nuclear energy, agro-industrial and desalination research, explosions for civil engineering and other peaceful projects. And so the list goes on.

Even a small, general reduction in military budgets (let us say 10 per cent) would contribute tremendously to meeting the urgent economic needs of both developed and developing nations. The New Stockholm Appeal ends with the slogan 'Together for the calling without delay of the United Nations World Disarmament Conference!' This emphasises the fact that the World Peace Council considers that the convening of the World Disarmament Conference has become a historical necessity.

The World Peace Council has decided to hold a Week of Activity, October 6-13, 1976, to emphasise the urgency of calling the World Disarmament Conference.

Public opinion, through campaigns and mass action, has to ensure that the two countries which have refused to attend any such conference, the People's Republic of China and the United States, change their attitude and stop boycotting its preparatory work. Examples of the effectiveness of public campaigns can be seen in the prevention of the use of the atomic bomb during the Korean war as a result of world-wide actions that accompanied the first Stockholm Appeal in 1950. Recently, public support for the Vietnamese people to a great extent helped to put an end to US aggression against Vietnam and the peoples of Indo-China.

Other examples can be cited of mass action in support of peace, justice and national independence. They have been highly instrumental in achieving results such as preventing a repeat of the horrors of the second world war, and in repulsing imperialist aggression.

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There are many ways in which people can make their contribution to the New Stockholm Appeal. First of all, every individual can sign it, and ask others to do likewise (the London Co-op Education Department will, on request, forward signature forms). The Appeal's significance can be explained at meetings of trade union branches, relating it to people's daily life and their everyday problems. Much of the unemployment and the inflation we suffer today is the direct result of the arms race, and its cessation could help in solving these problems.

LETTERS

Corporate State

READER VRANCH in his letter (*LM*, July 1976) refers to a potential situation of which I have myself been aware for some years now—the sliding of this country to fascism. Interestingly enough few journals make any noise about this—indeed, letters to union magazines or *New Statesman* are all ignored. All the while, of course, our 'free press' highlights social security 'scroungers', immigration of coloured people, resistance by the minority to wage cuts and higher unemployment and the 'need' for less spending on social services.

What is significant is how Thatcher & Co seek to play down or ridicule the very idea of the corporate state, when anyone with political savvy and knowledge of fascism can see that the foundations are already existing, and work has begun on the structure itself. Talk about blinding by throwing sand in the eyes. . . . Constantly we hear about the red threat, left extremists, Troskyist plotters, Communist subversion—but whenever the threat of fascism is made public, Tories in both major parties seek to ridicule the notion. Tory MP Tapsell says in the House of Commons: 'Here is a danger to be guarded against, but the country faces grave economic peril and we should not lightly disregard what could be productive methods of behaviour simply because of a fear of the words "corporate state".' 'Productive methods of behaviour' is probably what we see as embryonic fascism, which of course Tories and their capitalist backers and promotors inexorably gravitate towards in serious crises.

Perhaps the magazine of left unity might initiate a movement *now* to combat the ever-growing threat which looms here as surely as it did in Germany and Italy 50 years ago.

BRUNO CLIFTON
Cardiff

Message from Moscow

I BOUGHT a copy of *Labour Monthly* (July 1976) in a 'Soyuzpechat' kiosk in Moscow and found it very interesting. My special attention has been attracted by your item about the artist, German Horacio, who with his drawings fought against fascism. I liked the contents very much and you have my thanks for the publication. I think you will find my brief note of appreciation especially important as it comes from one who about 34 years ago suffered very much as the result of the second world war: I lost both my legs as a

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ten-year-old boy during the Nazi bombing of Moscow in 1942.

I am doing all I can for peace and am very proud that my country stands so firmly for peace. It is highly desirable to have free exchanges in the ideological, scientific, technical and cultural fields. Sport has a large part to play in this and so have trade and commerce.

'What do you think about opportunities for trade between Britain and the Soviet Union?' I asked Lord Boyd Orr in 1963. He replied: 'As President of the British Council for promoting Trade between East and West, I am strongly in favour of increasing that trade. It could be enormously increased to the benefit of both Britain and the Soviet Union, and in addition make for peace.'

We Soviet people have no intention of dominating the world by force. We hate fascism; we hate war. And the Soviet government acts according to our feelings and to our desire for friendship with other nations. So let's be optimistic!

IGOR MIKHAILUSENKO
Moscow

NATIONAL UNION OF MINEWORKERS DERBYSHIRE AREA

Fraternal greetings to all trade unionists attending the 1976 TUC.

Let us demand the immediate nationalisation of all means of production, distribution and exchange as a first step towards a socialist Britain.

The No 2 DIVISIONAL COUNCIL of ASTMS

send greetings to all TUC associates and colleagues everywhere for social justice, world-wide

UNWORKABLE
UNFAIR
UNEQUAL

SAY NO TO THE PAY POLICY

ACTT

ALAN SAPPER
General Secretary
Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians

MUSICIANS' UNION

says . . .

Now is the time to improve the quality of life.
Read the TUC Working Party's Report on The Arts.
Resist the cuts!

MUSICIANS' UNION
29 Catherine Place
Buckingham Gate, London SW1
General Secretary: John Morton

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BOOKS

Mindful Militants:
The Amalgamated Engineering Union in Australia 1920-1972
T. Sheridan
Cambridge University Press, 330 pp, £7.50

IN BRITAIN, in 1852, the engineering employers locked out their workers in an effort to crush the newly formed Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE). It was a severe blow to the infant organisation, but such defeats are rarely complete ones. Twenty-seven Society members emigrated to Australia and in the same year they established the first overseas branch in Sydney—later to be followed by many others over the rest of the world.

When in 1920 the ASE in Britain joined a number of other societies to form the Amalgamated Engineering Union, an Australian section was established. So the links were maintained, and it was not till 1968 that the Australian AEU finally cut free from the parent union in Britain.

Mindful Militants is a very full history of the Australian AEU during the years 1920-72, written with admirable clarity and without any pretentiousness. In addition, the obvious similarities with our experience will make it a specially useful source book for the British labour movement.

At first glance, because the Australian union grew out of ours, it may appear to the casual observer that all the teaching was done by the parent union, but this book shows that such is not the case. It points to two major lessons, the first on free collective bargaining. In the struggle by the Australian workers against settlements imposed by the state, the competitive interests of employers brought forward anonymous benefactors in 1968, and again in 1971, to pay fines imposed by the Courts to avert a head-on clash. Their experience was a major help to our union when we were fighting NIRC.

It is hoped that the second lesson is learnt of the importance of the union governing itself, without outside intervention. Those forces who wanted to retain the independent conduct of the Australian AEU had to fight opponents bent on petitioning the Commonwealth Arbitration Court to conduct union elections—bringing into play the cynical influence of the mass media. People who used these tactics and smeared anyone who opposed them may have in the short term won a following of uninvolved members, but never the hearts of the activists.

The record also gives a clear lie to the argument that the call for union elections by Court postal ballots arose from a genuine concern with democracy. For, once the tide began to turn in favour of the progressives, its one-time supporters lost interest in intervention by the courts.

The *News Weekly* was one such publication. In August 1963 it could write sourly: 'Confidence in the clean ballot legislation has materially suffered over the last twelve or eighteen months, in particular as a result of what many regard as certain "political" judgements, as well as administrative actions.' By 1966 petitions to the Australian Court had ceased, and the Australian AEU returned, as it had in its first 100 years, to carrying out its own elections undisturbed by any outside 'interference'.

While there is no exact parallel with our situation, this book points to a clear lesson: in order to defend democracy in a trade union, there is

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no substitute for hard work and direct contact with the rank-and-file members. Those who tried to by-pass such contacts and give sway to distortions by mass media found that they were preaching a philosophy alien to the working people and more so to the craftsmen with a long-standing pride in conducting their own affairs.

This book is full of optimism for anyone in this country determined to struggle for a trade union that is democratic in the full sense of the word, and one that is able to make up its own mind without its policies being dictated by outside agents.

The book does less than justice to all the progressive forces in the history of the Australian AEU and may with some reason be accused of being sectarian. For all that, the rank-and-file members will be served well by this record of their union, written by a man with keen knowledge of the problems of engineering workers and an obvious commitment to their cause.

HUGH SCANLON

The Lords Against the Unions

Labour Research Department, 28 pp, 25p

HERE IS A NEAT résumé of recent activities of the House of Lords in blocking legislation either designed to strengthen the rights of trade unions and the working class or thought to be encroaching on the rights of a privileged minority highly represented in the Upper Chamber. The completely undemocratic nature of this Chamber with its non-elected 'representatives' and their origins and anti-working class bias is clearly shown. There is a short glossary of the more important representatives of monopoly capitalism who sit in the Lords. A useful pocket-book.

G. D.

Student Politics and Higher Education

Digby Jacks

Lawrence & Wishart, 176 pp, £4.50

THERE WERE many thousands of students who contributed to the transformation of the National Union of Students in the 1960s and early 1970s. Digby Jacks is one of the handful who straddled both eras, from the impotent and confused organisation of the early 1960s to the end of his term of office as president in 1973.

The union had been led by a 'self-perpetuating oligarchy'—smart, well-tailored, soft-spoken young men, almost all from the universities, serving their time before taking up good jobs lined up in the diplomatic service, or merchant banks, or mysterious international foundations, or as back-room boys for right-wing Labour leaders. The depth of their anti-communism was matched by the superficiality of their talent as negotiators. They had almost total control over NUS through a constitution banning 'politics', a tightly sown-up election system and a battery of 'advisers' including some later known to have been working for the CIA.

Against them was ranged a small but growing group of Communist and left Labour students, Young Liberals and militant student union officers, united mainly by the idea of 'student trade unionism'—simply that the *mass* of students could be mobilised into action in defence of their interests and in an organised and reasonably disciplined union.

This perspective was attacked vigorously from the right ('We don't want to behave like apprentices . . .') and the left ('. . . a minority of students can be won to the left on ideological grounds; most are part of the ruling class'). Both illusions have been shattered.

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But then, the best way of disproving a faulty theory was always to go out and make a better theory actually work in practice, and this is the real merit of Digby's book—containing a clear statement and analysis of the main events and developments, especially in the crucial late 1960s. I would recommend it especially to any readers of *Labour Monthly* as a suitable present to sons or daughters expecting to go to college next autumn—it will give them a grasp of the strength and weaknesses of the whole student movement, in the universities, polys, techs, art schools and colleges of education.

What the book is weaker on is the *feel* of the student movement (partly due to pressures on space, in order to keep the price reasonable, which meant that detailed descriptions of particular struggles in colleges up and down the country were cut: perhaps there may be a follow-up). The student movement is in some ways a permanent example of a 'day in politics seeming like a year'—with very rapid shifts and movements and advances and retreats. Any ex-student leader, visiting his old college two years after leaving, finds his innovations described as 'traditions' (and forgotten in another two years).

Indeed, one of the reasons why the Communist Party was able to play such an important (possibly the decisive) role in the transformation of NUS was simply its *permanence*, making it possible to build up experience, know-how, records, organisation and a long-term view, an attitude of mind that was an object of awe among those other sections of students with whom we closely co-operated.

It is a rare experience to see such an important political development as the transformation of NUS all the way through, virtually from scratch to completion: there were, I suppose, about a dozen of us who had that opportunity. Digby Jacks obviously feels privileged to have been able to make that contribution, a feeling I can recognise and endorse.

PHIL GOODWIN

A Man of The Times: Talks and Travels in a Disrupted World
Iverach McDonald

Hamish Hamilton, 220 pp, £5.50

WELL KNOWN in journalist and diplomatic circles as successively foreign correspondent, diplomatic correspondent and foreign editor of the *Times*, and later as managing editor and associate editor, Iverach McDonald tells the story of his work for the paper from 1932 to 1974. Despite the usual gentle ridicule of foreigners who persist in believing that his paper speaks the mind of the British government of the day, he leaves no doubt that it usually does that very thing—especially, apart from very rare lapses, where foreign policy is concerned. And anyone who realises that ever since 1917 the dominant strand in British foreign policy has been implacable enmity of our capitalist rulers (however subtle their manoeuvring) for the country which first overthrew capitalism and then chased out its remnants and its allies will not be surprised at the echoes of that enmity audible even in McDonald's temperate account.

They will be heard, not merely in his repetition of some familiar myths, for example, about the Soviet people not being allowed to express their own opinions, but also in some less obvious omissions. To take a few out of many examples, he does not tell the reader that the USSR in 1936-39 helped republican Spain with skilled soldiers, war material and foodstuffs to the utmost, until Britain's backing of Hitler, and France's blocking of

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aid, left no further way possible but war: no, he merely says that Stalin, after first 'appearing to commit himself wholly', 'drew back into cover' (p 27). Again, he tells the story of the abandonment of Czechoslovakia by Britain and France to the Nazis in 1938-39 without even mentioning the clear and documented Soviet offers to help the Czechs single-handed if only their government so wished—even to the point of advancing enormous forces to the Soviet frontier in the late summer of 1939 (pp 42-3). He speaks quite truly of the Soviet Union's economic exhaustion and the desperate plight of its people at the end of the war (pp 100-8), but somehow omits to mention the long preparations by the British and US governments, from the notorious memorandum of Churchill to Macmillan in 1942, and Sir Samuel Hoare's assurances of post-war anti-Soviet policy to Franco's foreign minister in 1943, to President Truman's abrupt ending of Lend-Lease aid and his open boasts to his familiars after the war, for their attempt to take advantage of that exhaustion in the common struggle by re-establishing a chain of hostile governments all along the Soviet borders, as in 1919-39. He asserts that the establishment of a non-socialist government in Poland, friendly to the USSR, would have been against 'Stalin's Marxist conviction' (p 87), overlooking the fact that just such a government has existed since 1945 in Finland. He does not even mention that sending Soviet missiles to Cuba in 1962 extracted from the US a pledge not to repeat its attempted invasion (pp 183-5), a fact carefully hushed up by the British press including the *Times*, but confirmed once again by Fidel Castro at the recent Congress of the Cuban Communist Party.

Such omissions, vitiating any true assessment of international politics before and since the war, nevertheless make all the more significant certain positive admissions. He admits that the Western Allies deliberately blocked the Soviet proposals for a unified but neutralised Germany after the war (p 133), and ran away in 1955 from both the Soviet offer of a European Security Pact, which would eliminate the two opposed blocs, and from Eden's own tentative proposal to control military forces on both sides of the dividing line in Europe under international inspection (pp 140, 141, 178). He admits that the Western governments 'made a great mistake' in ignoring or rejecting the successive plans of the Polish Foreign Minister Rapacki for disallowing nuclear weapons in the two Germanies, Poland and Czechoslovakia, and later for reducing overall military forces in central Europe (pp 158, 164, 171). Much else of the same kind could be quoted. And even that is better than nothing, considering the present wave of lying and shameless anti-detente propaganda about 'Soviet expansionism'.

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN

LRD Guide to the Employment Act 1975 and to the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974

Labour Research Department, 48 pp, 40p

THE LRD is to be congratulated on its latest pamphlet. Within its covers there is a simple and clear explanation of the new legislation affecting trade unions, introduced by the Labour government following the repeal of the Industrial Relations Act. No shop steward can afford to be without it, and at cheap rates for bulk purposes it is the best bargain in the book trade.

B. R.

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New Life in Portugal
Regina Fischer and Cyril Pustan
Kay Beachamp, 36 pp, 20p

DETAILS OF a brief trip often mislead the reader as to the true situation in any country, but I can only recommend this pamphlet to anyone who has been following events in Portugal since the 1974 revolution.

Here are seen some of the activities of farm workers in the Alentejo region struggling to maintain the farms taken over from absentee owners and transformed into co-operatives since 1974 in face of the strong opposition and resistance of monopoly capitalism and the drift to the right of successive governments. The authors travel from Lisbon with other volunteers giving up free time to help with the olive harvest on one of the co-operative farms. Their experiences indicate that the Portuguese workers will not easily give up the gains of the last two years.

GREG DOUGLAS

Fathers and Daughters
Cathy Porter
Virago/Quartet, 308 pp, £5.95

ON APRIL 11, 1881, Marx wrote to his daughter Jenny: 'Have you been following the trial of the assassins in St Petersburg? They are sterling people through and through, *sans pose melodramatique*, simple, businesslike, heroic. Shouting and doing are irreconcilable opposites . . . they try to teach Europe that their *modus operandi* is a specifically Russian and historically inevitable method about which there is no more reason to moralise—for or against—than there is about the earthquake in Chios.'

It is about these sterling people that Cathy Porter writes. The subject is fascinating, her research painstaking and her enthusiasms boundless. But are these ingredients enough to produce a good book? The author's weakness is that she tends to transplant her own particular enthusiasm for present day Women's Lib into tsarist Russia of more than a century ago. If she had only stuck to the history and background of these truly remarkable women, revolutionaries in their own rights, challenging their country's oppressors, finally organising the assassination of the Tsar and paying with their lives for it, she would have written a much better book. Too often, particularly in the first half, the author makes it appear as if Russia was seething with women's liberation, communes and co-operatives. She thus sometimes robs her diligent research of credibility.

To give just a few examples: 'The emancipation of serfs had reduced most of the less wealthy landowners to relative poverty, and for their daughters and sometimes their wives this came as a signal for their own emancipation, a welcome inspiration to leave the now precarious security of husbands and fathers and find work in the capital. *Many* girls, particularly those of the wealthier peasantry, left their husbands without a word, and the personal columns in *all* the newspapers were filled with touching appeals for "lost wives" ' (p 69, emphasis added). I am sure it happened, but how *often*? And was it in *all* the newspapers? Would it not have been more interesting to translate just one of these advertisements, and tell us where it appeared and that the author found similar ones in other newspapers?

A page later she talks about unmarried women who could not get a passport for any travel within Russia or abroad. The way out for them was a marriage of convenience with an enlightened man who provided her with a passport to independence. All extremely interesting and no doubt true, but then she gets carried away

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again: 'The new, so-called "fictitious marriage" became *extremely common* in the 1860s' (p 70). How common is extremely common?

The author's enthusiasm for communes sometimes leads her to equally absurd exaggerations: '. . . it was *natural* for young men and women to start living together in intimate communal groups, which could confer their own standards of normality and encourage people to experience together all the difficulties of establishing trust and honesty between the sexes' (p 78). 'A *large number* of girls, aristocratic, bourgeois and peasant, on arrival in the cities moved into a mixed house or flat' (p 79). '. . . *all over Moscow and St Petersburg* young people were experiencing equally dramatic and painful confrontations. *Everywhere* there were "nihilists", salon democrats and liberal day school girls arguing and *living together*' (p 83).

It has a 1976 ring about it and raises doubts in the reader's mind as to the author's ability to interpret her raw material. This is all the more a pity because her most valuable contribution is her delving into sources which are not easily available to the English reader. She quotes extensively from contemporary journals, newspapers, pamphlets, diaries, official publications and statistics, all of which help us to understand these courageous women, committed to the progressive movements of the 1860s and 70s which finally led to the assassination of the Tsar in 1881 and the public hanging of the chief organiser, Sofya Perovskaya, and the early death of many of her contemporaries in life exile or imprisonment.

In spite of the above criticism, *Fathers and Daughters* I believe will find its place in the 'Us and Them literature', and the reviewer is grateful to Cathy Porter for giving us so many fascinating pictures of the way in which a small group of selfless women spent their lives in trying to better the lives of their brothers and sisters in tsarist Russia, women who less than forty years later were followed by a whole class, completely and effectively altering the course of history of Russia and indeed the world.

BRIDGET NICOLSON

A History of Gold and Money
Pierre Vilar
NLB, 360 pp, £7.50

WE ARE TOLD at the start of Chapter 2 that Vilar's book 'is not intended to be a comprehensive history of gold and money' (p 23). A little earlier we are told: 'My theme is gold and gold is quite different from money' (p 19). And thence, to his final conclusion that 'gold has not disappeared as a factor in the world economy. . . . Moreover, the question of gold as a means of international payment is not to be confused with the issue of everyday money and of the currency in each national economy' (p 344). So, after all this, what?

Pierre Vilar, Professor of Economic History at the Sorbonne, Paris, refers eight times to Karl Marx in this book, 'whose analyses of money are, characteristically, a model of theoretical elaboration, but based on the most thorough historical research' (p 7). And he pays tribute to Marx's 'brilliant summary . . . in a *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* and in *Capital*' (p 309).

Marxist students at the Sorbonne may be appeased by these passing tributes to Marx, but it would have benefited the whole approach if a bit more of Marx's 'model theoretical elaboration' based on class society had been adopted instead of a wholly eclectic combination of authorities.

P.S.

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Eisenstein: A Documentary Portrait, Norman Swallow. Allen & Unwin, 155 pp, £5.50.

The State Law of the Socialist Countries, A. K. Makhnenko. Progress (Central Books), 438 pp, £2.

Scientific Intelligentsia in the USSR, edited by D. M. Gvishiano, S. R. Mikulinsky and S. A. Kugel. Progress (Central Books), 248 pp, £1.50.

The 1975 Referendum, David Butler and Uwe Kitzinger. Macmillan, 316 pp, £7.95.

Full-Hearted Consent: The Story of the Referendum Campaign and the Campaign for the Referendum, Philip Goodhart. Davis-Poynter, 264 pp, £5.

The Regional Problem, Stuart Holland. Macmillan, 178 pp, £7.95.

Capital versus the Regions, Stuart Holland. Macmillan, 328 pp, £8.95.

The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology, Alvin W. Gouldner. Macmillan, 304 pp, £7.95.

Law and Morality—A Reader, edited by Louis Blom-Cooper and Gavin Drewry. Duckworth, 266 pp, £12.50.

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Economic Integration, V. I. Kuznetsov. Progress (Central Books), 174 pp, £1.

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The Distant Drum: Reflections on the Spanish Civil War, edited by Philip Toynbee. Sidgwick & Jackson, 192 pp, £5.50.

Kerr's King Hit!, Andrew Clark and Clement Lloyd. Cassell (Australia), 270 pp, £1.95.

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A Study of Soviet Foreign Policy, I. D. Ovsyany and others. Progress (Central Books), 380 pp, £1.50.

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The Unions: Structure, Development and Management, Marten Estey. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 130 pp, £3.

The 1926 General Strike in North Lanarkshire, John McLean. History Group of the Communist Party, 26 pp, 30p.

Don't Let Them Con You! We Can *Win Peace,* Gordon Schaffer. Women for World Disarmament, 12 pp, free (6½p postage).

Industrial Democracy—A Trade Unionist's Guide, Labour Research Department, 40 pp, 35p.

The Social Contract 1976-77, Trades Union Congress, 14 pp, 15p.

World Economic Crisis, Colin Sweet. British Peace Committee, 40 pp, 30p.

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LABOUR MONTHLY's price is to be increased in October to 45p, an unavoidable rise of 10p per issue, making the new annual subscription rate £5.40. These are hard times, as our readers know only too well, and the necessity of maintaining *LM* as a weapon in the struggle against inflation and unemployment has meant taking account of that very inflation in calculating how we are to beat the mounting costs we face.

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